

C EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

**Supplement to
The Colonial Newsletter**

**Volume 26, No. 3
Serial No. 74
September 1986**

Phil Mossman's Notebook

The attached issue No. 74 of CNL, one of our "Data Book" series, is a preliminary and experimental research document -- a new departure in numismatic publishing in that it probably represents the first time that an entire book has been submitted to the total membership of an organization for review prior to formal publication. The work presented at this time represents some eight years of effort by Philip L. Mossman, MD of Hampden, Maine which began as a compilation of a personal notebook on the Early American Coinages, and then evolved into the present format. It is not yet complete; because of the complexity of the subject matter and the difficulties in locating and evaluating specific up-to-date research documentation on various Early American numismatic subjects, we have decided to publish the volume at the present time with the specific request that each of our Patrons read and study the particular portions in which he or she feels proficient and advise ye Editor of changes, corrections, deletions, expansions and references which should be incorporated as necessary to update the overall subject matter.

We anticipate conducting a running forum of commentary in future issues of CNL which will include comments received from our Patrons regarding the material in Dr. Mossman's book together with his response to these inputs. Those wishing to contact Dr. Mossman directly may write to him in care of CNL and your inquiries will be forwarded to him.

The book is a framework for the presentation and correlation -- as the title indicates -- of the numismatic, economic and historical aspects of the money of the American colonies and the Confederation. Emphasis is on the metallic currency of the era; however the paper currency is also treated briefly and should probably be expanded in scope. Dr. Mossman has attempted to take today's precious numismatic artifacts out of dealer's trays and collector's cabinets and put them back into the pockets of their contemporaries -- as money -- and as a reflection of the economic needs and frustrations of people of that era.

The heart of the book comprises Chapters 7 and 8 on the Confederation Coinages (which is merely a general overview) and The Coppers Panic of 1789, respectively. Other chapters are support material which describe the circumstances preceding the Confederation period and the consequences thereof. To the casual reader we suggest that these two chapters, plus the preface, would be a suitable area for initial reading. Of particular significance, we believe, is Dr. Mossman's discussion and analysis in Chapter 8 (and Appendix II) of the financial advantages accruing to the mint operators from the practice of overstriking existing coins.

At the present time our intent is that we will eventually produce a revised

edition, possibly in a hardback version, which incorporates the suggestions and comments of CNL Patrons. We anticipate that there will be an extensive revision. There are areas which are incomplete, and in some cases incorrect since they do not reflect up-to-date research. There are probably other topics which have not even been mentioned and should be included for completeness. While the present material has undergone an initial review over the years by several CNL Patrons, including ye Editor, most of us (including the author) recognize the comprehensive scope of this volume and that none of us are proficient in all aspects that are organized within this framework; accordingly, it seems reasonable to publish this preliminary version for the use of CNL Patrons and to request the assistance of all of you in debugging it. Much of the charted information now in tabular form can be converted into graphical format but has, for now, been left in tabular format so that specific items can be checked for accuracy.

One CNL Patron has suggested that, today, "... the study of American colonial era coinages and economic history is going through the initial stages of a renaissance, and our work will be seen by future students as some of the first steps taken toward a more solid understanding of the field." Years ago when ye Editor first became interested in the monies of Early America he quickly determined that there was only one general reference available that had stood the test of time, and that was Sylvester Sage Crosby's monumental work "The Early Coins of America; and ... (etc)". Subsequently he determined that a considerable amount of later work had been accomplished, but that it was extremely fragmented and difficult to locate, and while much of it was well thought out and documented, an equal amount seemed to have been accomplished in a vacuum and consisted of speculation, misinformation, and hypothesis passed off as scholarship in the Early American field; problems which remain vexatious today, even to those of us proficient in a specialty area.

As Dr. Mossman collected and organized the material for his book he conducted an extensive literature search and, in so doing, encountered the problems outlined in the paragraph above. In the Preface he states "... I have intended to remain conservative, but no doubt have been guilty of perpetuating traditional inaccuracies or inventing some of my own." It is in this spirit that we recognize several shortcomings in the present version, and we specifically mention two of them now: (1) the material on Massachusetts silver is based heavily on the studies by Noe and does not incorporate more recent studies which have shown that Noe was inaccurate on many points; accordingly, many of the conclusions in this particular section must be substantially revised even though they represent the "state-of-the-art" in numismatic research at a somewhat earlier time, and (2) the section on Saint Patrick's coinages is outdated for similar reasons and, unfortunately - we believe, includes considerable "entrenched conjecture" which more recent studies in England have shown to be inaccurate. This section will also be extensively revised in the future edition.

Why then, our Patrons may ask, has this material been included -- why was it not omitted or adequately revised prior to publication? The answer is a bit complex, but in summary is both simple and direct: Revisions can go on and on and nothing may be accomplished as a result; ye Editor believes that Dr. Mossman's work is important and should be presented to the Patrons of The Colonial Newsletter Foundation in Data Book form for their collective review and critique, and we have done so. We believe that our Patrons are individually and collectively much more than casual numismatists and will be willing to assist in a systematic, scholarly and constructive review of the material collected in Dr. Mossman's notebook. So --- lets get on with it!

RECENT ACCESSIONS

The following is a tabulation of recent donations received by The Colonial Newsletter Foundation. Our sincere thanks to all of you who have made these contributions. Bibliographical references are shortened to conserve space.

David L. Palmer - Bayshore, NY
Book - Studies on Money in
Early America; ANS, NY, 1976.

David Gladfelter; Moorestown, NJ
Sale Catalog - Pine Tree Auction Co.
EAC - Feb. 15, 1975
The Connecticut Collection

Ronald Guth & Jeff Garrett
Mid-American Rare Coin Galleries
Lexington, KY
Coins -
(1) 1786 CONSTELLATIO NOVA 1-C
(2) 1788 Vermont Ryder 27
(3) 1794 Talbot, Allum & Lee mule;
lettered edge
(4) 1788 Vermont Ryder 16

Robert Wester; Suncook, NH
Book - The Trader's Best Companion,
and etc.
by Joseph Chaplin
Newburyport, July 24, 1795
(Xerox replica of printed
original)

Edward R. Barnsley; Beach Haven, NJ
Coins - 53 specimens
Connecticut Coppers of 1788

Book - Connecticut Paper Currency,
1709-1793
by William West Bradbeer
Hartford, 1923
(Xerox replica of typewritten
original)

Donald W. Norton; Berlin, NH
Coin - counterfeit reference
1787 Immunis Columbia (Dory
Duplicate)

Michael Oppenheim; Montreal, Quebec CANADA
Token - Wood's #33

THE COMPUTER SURVEY

According to our personal computer survey conducted during the past year or so, approximately 15% of CNL Patrons own or use personal computers and there is every indication that this percentage will increase substantially in the future. The vast majority of these machines are "PC" types (IBM or compatible models), next the Apple II series, and finally the Apple Macintosh series. One or two other manufacturer's models are in use in isolated cases. The purpose of our survey was (1) to help make a determination of which computer disk format would be most useful for future distribution of numismatic data to our Patrons, and (2) to determine which formats we would be most likely to receive for publication from our Patrons.

Those of you who are familiar with personal computers realize that data recorded on disks by one family of machines cannot be read by another and the conversion of data from one format to another is a big problem! The same problem exists to a lesser degree within a single family because of differences in software techniques; however, most software wordprocessing programs can "write-to-disk" their output in ASCII code so that it can be read by other software programs, and similar techniques utilizing DIF files permit the transfer of database and spreadsheet information between different programs.

At present, CNL can accept inputs from our Patrons on IBM PC and compatible disks, Apple II disks and Macintosh disks. If you wish to use this method for communicating manuscripts, databases or whatever to us please write first or send a sample disk so that we can determine whether we can read it OK. The entire manuscript for Dr. Mossman's book, for example, was written on a Tandy 1000 personal computer, transmitted on two 5 1/4" floppy disks and "typeset" on Qume Letterpro 20 printers driven by a Leading Edge Model "D" personal computer. We anticipate converting CNL production within the next year to a fully computerized "desktop publishing" system utilizing Apple Macintosh and LaserWriter computers with appropriate software; thus, we can utilize charts and graphics generated by our Patrons as well as text. Hopefully, computerized halftone photographic imaging techniques can be accommodated as well within the next several years. Another objective is the conversion of all prior CNL issues into computer format so that digital indexing and data search can be conducted by, or for, our Patrons. Provisions are included in the planning to incorporate non-CNL generated information within this same database.

ODDS & ENDS

PUBLICATION DELAY of this issue was the result of the unusually large size -- some ten times the number of printed pages of a normal issue, plus the need for back-to-back printing to reduce the thickness to a reasonable size for distribution. In the midst of this work the death of a family member caused substantial additional delay. So -- please forgive the necessity to mail these copies in early-1987 rather than the scheduled late-1986. As a direct result it has also been necessary to reschedule the previously announced papers by **GARY TRUDGEN & BOB WESTER**; they will appear in the early 1987 issues. The **QUESTIONNAIRE** that was distributed with our 1986 request for contributions has still not been received from a small number of Patrons -- if we do not have a completed copy from you, your name will not appear in the **CNL ROSTER** to be published in mid-1987; question 4 gives permission for us to publish your name! Also -- about **SIXTY** Patrons did not send in their 1986 subscription/contribution to CNL and have been dropped from the mailing list; they will not receive Issue No. 74. **Subscription/contribution requests for 1987** are scheduled to be mailed to Patrons during February 1987.

PROPOSED CNLF BYLAWS CHANGES --- & 1987 MEETING

During mid-1986 ye Editor wrote a personal letter to each of 20 selected CNL Patrons who have been exceptionally supportive over the years, or who have expressed a personal interest in an ancillary organization of CNL Patrons that would include technical and social meetings, or who have been personally active in similar organizations and could share their opinions regarding the advantages and problems associated with such activities. With each letter we enclosed a copy of a proposed restructuring of the bylaws of The Colonial Newsletter Foundation that outlined some basic guidelines within which such an organization might operate. We asked some very specific questions regarding these guidelines and requested opinions on the suitability of the approach and the general feasibility and desirability of such a program.

While there was a very positive attitude expressed by almost everyone who responded, there was also an underlying question expressed that can be characterized as "... do we really NEED anymore meetings, conventions, activities, etc. & etc. ... why not just continue as in the past?" It was suggested that a casual get-together of CNL Patrons be arranged sometime during 1987 to discuss these ideas, perhaps in conjunction with the ANA Atlanta Convention on August 26-30, 1987. If any of our Patrons who are planning to attend that convention would like to assist in such a get-together, please advise me as soon as possible.